

At a Glance

SC Literacy Champions Award

September 2008

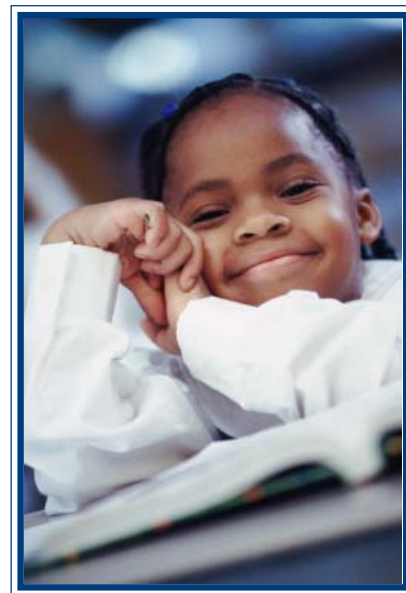
Reading: a critical skill for the 21st century

Nationally:

- ◆ Less than one-third of 13-year-olds are daily readers, a 14 percent decline from 20 years earlier.
- ◆ Nineteen percent of 17-year-olds consider themselves “non-readers.”
- ◆ On average, Americans ages 15 to 24 spend almost two hours a day watching TV, and only seven minutes of their daily leisure time on reading.
- ◆ Reading scores for 12th graders (NAEP, 2005) fell significantly from 1992 to 2005, with the sharpest declines among lower-level readers.

In South Carolina:

- ◆ Despite seeing improvements from the previous year, from 2007 to 2008, over forty percent of elementary and middle schools in SC experienced declines in English Language Arts performance on the Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test.
- ◆ On the 2007 National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), SC’s ranking among states on the reading portion of the test is 42nd for 4th grade reading; 41st for 8th grade reading.



Research conducted by the EOC, independently or in collaboration with other entities, confirms the following:

- ◆ If a student cannot read on a proficient level in 8th grade, he/she only has a 50 percent likelihood of graduating from high school on-time.*
- ◆ Performance on reading measures is directly linked to performance on measures of mathematics, science, and social studies.
- ◆ Student outcomes are positively affected when school and home goals are closely aligned and when trust exists between families and educators.

South Carolina Literacy Champions

Recognizing Student Success Through Service

South Carolina Literacy Champions is a recognition program designed to promote sustainable models of post-secondary education / K-12 school partnerships as a means to boost student reading achievement.

Through the work of an advisory board, successful service learning programs within post-secondary institutions (public, private, and technical colleges) that are building reading skills among students in grades K-12 will be recognized annually for their work.

For additional information about South Carolina Literacy Champions, visit www.eoc.sc.gov/SCLC or call 803-734-6164.

*The Relationship between Reading Proficiency and High School Graduation Rates in South Carolina, 2005 (<http://scpairs.sc.gov>).

Service Learning

Service-Learning is an educational strategy under which students learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service experiences that meet actual community needs.

*Its Impact **

♦ **Students** – Studies show that when service-learning is explicitly connected to curriculum, young people make gains on achievement tests, complete their homework more often, and increase their grade point averages. Service-learning is associated with both increased attendance and reduced dropout rates. In comparison with peers, students who engage in service-learning show less alienation and exhibit fewer behavior problems. Students who engage in service-learning activities increase their knowledge of community needs, become committed to an ethic of service, and develop a more sophisticated understanding of politics and morality.

♦ **Schools** – *Learn and Serve*, affiliated with the Corporation for National and Community Service, has summarized research on the impact of service-learning on participating K-12 students. The 2007 research shows that students who participated in service-learning scored higher than non-participating students, particularly in social studies, writing, and English Language Arts. They were found to be more cognitively engaged and more motivated to learn. Additional research shows that, as a result of service-learning, teachers and students tend to become more cohesive as a group. Students report feeling more connected to their school, while teachers report having more and deeper conversations about teaching and learning, and how learning best occurs.

♦ **Communities** – Service-learning strengthens the connection between communities and their schools. Studies show that community members who participate as partners in service-learning tend to change their perception of young people, viewing them as important resources and contributors. They also gain by being direct recipients of service. One study found that on average participants produced service valued at four times the program costs.



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Statewide Media Partner of SC Literacy Champions

* Data compiled from Corporation for National and Community Service (http://www.servicelearning.org/filemanager/download/S-L_Impacts_K-12_Fact_Sheet.pdf) and Learning in Deed: National Commission Final Report (<http://www.learningindeed.org/slcommission/report.html>).